



Ministry for Children and Families

PROGRESS
on the
Response
to the
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Recommendations

DOC
BC
C5042
D:P764
2000
c.3

Ministry for Children and Families Progress on the Response to the
United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society Recommendations

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY
VICTORIA, B.C. V8V 2M4



Progress Report - SUCCESS Recommendations Ministry for Children and Families

On March 10th, 1999, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. released a report on fostering better dialogue between the Ministry for Children and Families and the Chinese Community.

The report, entitled, 'Child Protection Issues in the Chinese Community: Our Views and Recommendations', has served as a foundation for a new dialogue between the Ministry for Children and Families and the Chinese community in Vancouver on child protection matters.

Since the report's release, representatives from the Ministry and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. have worked together to address the concerns identified in the report's recommendations. This partnership has produced tangible results. The results are summarized in the following responses to each of the 19 recommendations.

The Ministry for Children and Families looks forward to working co-operatively with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the Chinese Community in the future in order to advance our mutual interest in promoting the healthy development of children.

On Improving Communication:

Recommendation #1

MCF should have a long-term strategy in establishing channels of communication with the Chinese community. Designated ministry staff to respond to media's invitations and interviews are essential.

Response: The Communications Branch will work with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to develop a communications strategy outlining improved communications with the Chinese community, by mid-June. Media requests for interviews and invitations to ministry staff to be handled through a dedicated communications staff member who will be designated for this role.

STATUS: The Ministry drafted a communication strategy, with input from SUCCESS. This strategy has been reviewed by SUCCESS, and is now the communications plan that the Ministry is following.

Recommendation #2

While the Chinese community is felt to be under-represented in MCF services, we recommend that the ministry should increase transparency in enhancing the public's knowledge of its nature of service as well as to eliminate barriers created by language and cultural differences.

Response: The ministry is currently identifying its publication materials and is assessing where these materials can be best used. The ministry will then identify the appropriate vehicles for wide distribution. Where there are additional materials required, the ministry will work to develop these. Through the use of multi-lingual case workers, the ministry is working to eliminate barriers created by language and cultural differences.

STATUS: The Ministry is now working on developing distribution plans for the appropriate and wide dissemination of information out to the community. The Chinese Community Advisory Committee had also identified a need for written materials that clearly identified terms of a court proceeding. The two Child Protection Brochures answer this need.

Recommendation #3

To clarify myths about child protection laws and procedures, we recommend MCF produce a videotape on child protection in Cantonese and Mandarin for use by teachers and social service professionals in parenting workshops.

Response: The ministry is currently working with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to develop a videotape on Child Protection in Cantonese and Mandarin for use by the Chinese

Community for parenting workshops. The ministry is now working with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to develop this video, and ensure it is culturally appropriate.

In addition to the video, the ministry will provide the Chinese community with an effective information package, which would be appropriate for both families and professionals. This package would include a variety of materials which outline the ministry's services.

STATUS: The Video is now completed, and a distribution plan is underway.

Recommendation #4

In introducing to the public an accurate picture of MCF services, we recommend MCF produce a short promo in Cantonese and Mandarin and widely broadcast on Chinese TV.

Response: Working with S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the ministry will develop the content of community public service announcements to be used by Chinese television and radio. The public service announcements will be pre-produced and funded by the ministry to promote a range of ministry services.

STATUS: PSAs are drafted. Chinese Community Advisory Committee to discuss the best use of these PSAs, and whether broadcasting the video would achieve a better result.

Recommendation #5

MCF should deliver education program to new immigrants educating them on Child Protection Law.

Response: The ministry would be pleased to provide the video/information package developed in response to recommendation #3 above. This would be made available to community agencies to use in their delivery of education programs to new immigrants.

STATUS: The Working Group came to an agreement that the Ministry could not resource the delivery of an education program, but would be able to develop a set of written materials for distribution to community agencies. An Information Package, including a cover letter, resource list, the Child Protection Brochures, and the video, has been assembled.

Recommendation #6

Since the last Forum, there have been some inquiries from schools and churches regarding the feasibility of running workshops for their parents. We recommend that the Ministry designate social workers to partner with workers in community

agencies in planning and conducting workshops to parents in community groups. Such workshop could help parents obtain a comprehensive knowledge about the child protection law, operation procedures as well as available community supportive resources.

Response: The Vancouver/Richmond Regional office jointly with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is developing a parenting workshop. The objectives of the workshop are:

- To educate Chinese parents on Child Protection Legislation and Procedures.
- To address parents' unwarranted fear about child removal.
- To explore positive parenting skills in Canada.
- To identify alternatives to physical punishment.

This pilot project will be evaluated for effectiveness and possibly expanded to other regions as required.

STATUS: The Pilot Project was completed and evaluated. Feedback from the sessions was extremely positive, showing that this was a real learning opportunity, and was successful in reaching the intended audience. Kelly Ng, of SUCCESS, will be presenting a proposal to the Vancouver Ethnocultural Committee and the Regional Operations Divisions to review.

Recommendation #7

A fact sheet printed in Chinese explaining what an investigation is about, as well as the rights and opinions parents can have. This would help alleviate parents' anxiety arising from lack of understanding and uncertainty.

Response: The ministry, in consultation with the Chinese community, will develop this fact sheet, and include it in the information package.

STATUS: Two Child Protection Brochures were written: one on Investigations, and one on Court Proceedings. These brochures have been translated into Chinese and printed.

Recommendation #8

Debriefing by a third party afterwards to address any concerns the parents may have, to hook them up with community resources as well as to bridge between MCF and the parent(s) concerned in the process that follows.

Response: The ministry would agree to refer the family to an agency which would provide this type of counselling/debriefing service. The ministry also supports the involvement of a third party as early as possible in the investigation process, provided the family consents and the third party does not interfere with the investigation.

STATUS: MCF has agreed to this recommendation.

Recommendation #9

The Complaint Procedures should be properly distributed and explained to all parents whose children are removed. Assistance should be provided for parents who have difficulties in accessing the sources quoted because of language barrier.

Response: The ministry will ensure that the current (translated) Complaint Procedure fact sheet is widely available to clients, both through the ministry and community agencies.

The ministry complaint resolution process does not include complaints where there is a current child protection investigation underway or the matter has proceeded to the court.

STATUS: The Complaints Process Brochure was rewritten and translated into several language groups, including Chinese. MCF Communications Branch obtained a community agency distribution list from SUCCESS, and is ensuring that these brochures have a wide distribution.

Recommendation #10

MCF should review their current interpretation service to identify ways to improve the situation.

Response: The ministry agrees to undertake this review through the Advisory Committee. The review would then be used to determine the best use of this service in other areas of the province.

STATUS: The Chinese Community Advisory Committee is still reviewing this recommendation.

Recommendation #11

MCF should minimize the change in social workers on a case to ensure easier on-going communication.

Response: The ministry has, and will continue to focus on providing continuity in services. However, we recognize that there are factors which contribute to a change are not within ministry control, e.g. sickness, resignation, transfer, promotion, etc

STATUS: MCF has agreed with this recommendation.

On Enhancing Cultural Sensitivity:

Recommendation #12

It is now time for MCF to review their experience of applying the current model to Chinese families. Through involvement with Chinese parents and people with cultural and professional expertise, the Ministry will be able to identify factors/procedures that may lead to cultural or language misunderstanding in assessment.

Response: The ministry has a three-year risk assessment evaluation program. The ministry will ensure this issue is addressed through the risk assessment evaluation activities planned for the 1999 fiscal year.

STATUS: Child Protection Division will be evaluating their risk assessment program in the Fall of 2000. Once this evaluation is complete, an update will be provided to both SUCCESS and the Chinese Community Advisory Committee.

Recommendation #13

Special training sessions on understanding Chinese families for MCF intake workers involving Chinese parents and professionals will be beneficial to both MCF and the Chinese community.

Response: The ministry agrees to pilot special training sessions in the Vancouver/Richmond region and assess whether or not this should be extended to other regions.

STATUS: In September 1999, the Chinese Community Advisory Committee recommended that the Vancouver/Richmond Region survey workers who have responsibility in this area. The Vancouver/Richmond Region is currently holding preliminary discussions with staff.

Recommendation #14

MCF to re-allocate resources to ensure visible minorities, including the Chinese, have access to linguistically and culturally appropriate preventive services. This could include programs that open up parents to alternative family relational practices (such as parenting practices in Canada).

Response: The ministry will put more emphasis on ensuring the services we contract for reflect the diverse populations we serve.

STATUS: In September 1999, the Chinese Community Advisory Committee recommended that the Ministry develop an audit tool. This audit tool was developed, and the Vancouver Ethnocultural Committee is currently piloting the audit tool with funded agencies.

On the Legal Aspects:

Recommendation #15

To implement the Family Conference component of the CF&CS Act as soon as possible. This will help save a lot of time, money and energy for MCF, the court and the parents concerned without having to have court proceedings as the only route.

Response: Case Conferences are currently being undertaken by judges in most contested child protection matters. These Case Conferences have proven to be effective in resolving differences between the ministry and families, avoiding court delays and extensive trials. In addition, the ministry has implemented a new Mediation service under Section 22 of the *Child, Family and Community Services Act*. Mediation services are available province wide and can be requested by a family or MCF staff to assist in resolving issues as to how a child can be cared for or protected. In most cases the mediator chairs a case conference involving family members, service providers and other person of significance in the child's life. The goal of mediation is to try to resolve differences without having to resort to the Court process. Additionally, the ministry through policy, directs staff to hold integrated case conferences when planning for the care of children or the provision of services to families. Families and community are invited to participate in these case conferences. With these initiatives in place the ministry does not intend to proclaim the Family Conference section of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* at this time.

STATUS: In September 1999, the Chinese Community Advisory Committee identified that the social worker needed to involve the total family in the case conference, and explain everything to them.

It is the current practice for a social worker to hold integrated case conferences when planning for the care of children or the provision of services to families. Families and community are invited to participate in these case conferences. In contested child protection matters, the case conference process is determined by a Provincial Court Judge and who is able to attend depends on who the Judge invites. Social Workers can outline the purpose and options available through a case conference, but do not determine the process or who attends. In both of these instances, the social worker would involve the total family and other persons of significance in the child's life, and explain the process to them.

Recommendation #16

In the Chinese culture, extended family support is well established and should be fully utilized in assuring the child's kinship ties and culturally appropriate interim care. In this connection, we would urge the Ministry to take serious consideration of the extended family over restrictive foster care in planning interim care and to apply flexibility to expedite the assessment process when restrictive foster care procedures have to be followed.

We commend the current effort of Vancouver MCF in piloting a project that aims to bring in the grandparents to provide foster care. We look forward to learning the result of this project and hope that the outcome supports what we recommend here.

Response: A special pilot project "family finders" is in operation in the Vancouver region. This project is designed to find and assess family members who are willing to provide care for a child. Initial results from this program are very encouraging. The ministry is pleased that S.U.C.C.E.S.S. commends this initiative. The ministry will be evaluating the program in 1999 with a view to implementing similar programs in other regions. The ministry is reviewing its procedures for screening family members who are willing to care for a child. This review should be completed by the fall.

STATUS: This project was evaluated by the Ministry in the fall of 1999. This evaluation is now before the Ministry's Utilization Management Committee, who will forward recommendations, once complete.

Recommendation #17

In view of the many possible problems caused by placing young children in non-Chinese foster homes, it is recommended that supervised care in the family should be arranged as far as possible. This, of course, should apply to cases with no immediate danger. Such arrangement is also consistent with the principle that family is the best place for caring children.

Response: This is currently the ministry's practice. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and ministry policy require that the least intrusive measures be used to protect children. The ministry recently introduced an amendment to the Act to enable social workers to obtain a Court Order for supervising the child while in the family's care without having to remove the child. Previously a Supervision Order could only be obtained after a removal. This amendment enables more children to be protected while living with their families. Regrettably, some children can only be protected through a removal from the family.

STATUS: This is currently the Ministry's practice.

Recommendation #18

Also for cases posing no immediate danger to the children, conference involving interdisciplinary personnel including teachers, family physician, psychologist, social workers and other professionals who are involved with the family would be helpful before decision is made to remove the children. Such conference would be very useful in working out a plan of care for the children in the case that the children have to be removed. We understand that the practice is being experimented in some regions and we recommend that it be widely implemented.

Response: Removal of a child is only undertaken when the child is at immediate risk and no other means can ensure the child's protection. In most cases removal only occurs after extensive efforts by the ministry and community services to support the family. Where possible, case conferences, involving a wide range of professionals, are held prior to a decision to remove a child.

STATUS: The Ministry has agreed to this recommendation. In September 1999, the Chinese Community Advisory Committee recommended that the Ministry review this practice for gaps. This recommendation is still before the Chinese Community Advisory Committee for discussion.

Recommendation #19

MCF should embark on a campaign to educate the Chinese community on the important role of foster parents, the need for Chinese foster parents and finally the recruitment of Chinese foster parents. Considerations should be given to provide support to those parents who are qualified and dedicated but who may be barred from being recruited because of English language ability.

Response: The ministry has agreed to engage in a program to educate the Chinese community on the role of foster parents. The ministry has begun a campaign to recruit additional multi-cultural homes, including Chinese homes. A multi-lingual foster recruitment 1-800 telephone line has been established. Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) speaking foster parents are available to respond to these calls. The ministry will review its guidelines regarding English language ability for foster parents.

STATUS: The Guardianship Branch is evaluating this on an ongoing basis. In September 1999, the Chinese Community Advisory Committee recommended that the Ministry compile stats on how successful this program has been for Chinese families. The Ministry is in the process of compiling this material.